



THE POWER OF VISUAL MARKETING



INTRODUCTION

Are you harnessing the power of visual marketing for your business? Humans are hard-wired to respond to images, whether they appear in print, online or in real life. More than any other tactic in your marketing toolbox, images can instantly convey a mood, create excitement and inspire interest. How can you find, create and use high-quality images to improve your marketing results? Keep reading!

WHY VISUALS MATTER

In both print and online marketing, the importance of images in attracting attention is on the rise. Visually oriented social media networks, such as Instagram and Pinterest, are rapidly gaining ground. Some 26 percent of U.S. adult Internet users and 53 percent of those aged 18 to 29 use [Instagram](#), while 28 percent of U.S. adult Internet users are on Pinterest.

Even on social networks such as Facebook and Twitter, which aren't image-centered, the amount of photo-based content is soaring—and for good reason: photos get results. For example, posts with photos account for 87 percent of total interactions on [Facebook](#). On Twitter, [tweets with images](#) receive 18 percent more clicks, 89 percent more favorites and 150 percent more retweets.

But social networks aren't the only places where images matter. In print marketing material, store signage, print advertising or catalogs, photos get powerful results. Nearly seven in 10 consumers say the quality of a [product image](#) is "very important" in their decision to buy.



Photos are also vital to creating a strong online presence—on your website, in online advertising and on local search directories. Some 60 percent of consumers say they are more likely to contact a local business if [search results](#) include an image.

WHERE TO GET PHOTOS

Now that you know how important photos can be to your business's marketing mix, where can you get photos that will make the kind of impact you want? There are several options to consider.

1 TAKE YOUR OWN PHOTOS

If you or someone on your staff is skilled as a photographer, taking your own photos can save you money (although it will require an investment of time). It also ensures that you have the rights to use the photos in any way you see fit—after all, you own them.

Even if you're not particularly skilled at photography, you can take your own photos for certain purposes. For instance, candid, non-professional images are actually preferable for photos you plan to use on social media.

If you plan to regularly take your own professional-level photos, consider investing in a good-quality [digital camera](#).

2 HIRE A PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER

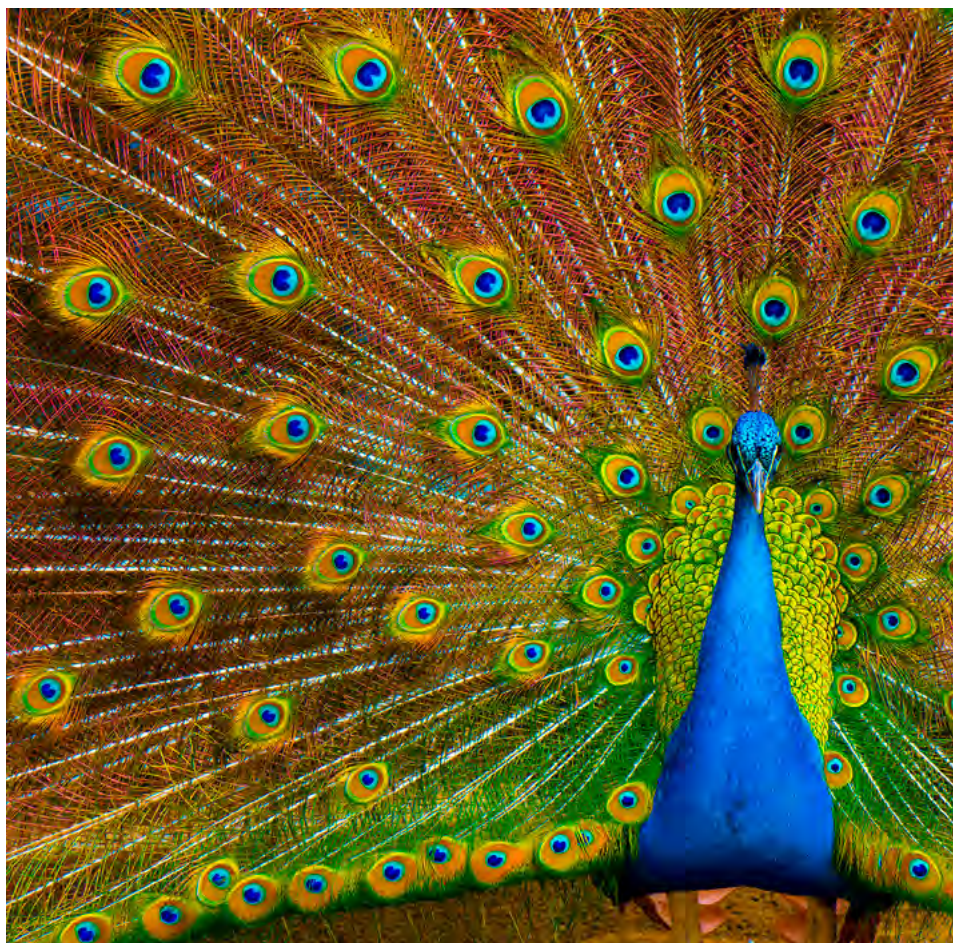
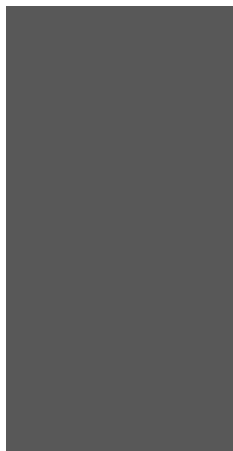
If you need photos of products you sell (such as merchandise in your store or items on your menu) or of yourself, your location or your employees, and you don't have in-house photographic expertise, it's best to hire a professional photographer. Professionals are skilled at conveying the proper mood and image to promote your business brand. They can create high-quality photos suited for long-term use on your business website, in advertisements or in print marketing materials.



WHERE CAN YOU USE IMAGES?

- on your website
- in presentations
- in your print marketing materials
- in print and online ads
- in social media
- in local search listings
- in store signage





You can find freelance photographers by asking friends and colleagues, talking to local art and design schools, or visiting websites such as [FreelancePhotoJobs](#), [iFreelance](#) or [SimplyHired](#). Make sure the photographer knows how you plan to use the photos and sells you the necessary rights for that purpose. Always provide proper credit to the photographer.

3 USE STOCK PHOTOS

If you are looking for photos to convey a concept or theme, as opposed to photos of yourself, your business and your staff, consider using stock photos. These are photos that photographers make available online for commercial use.

When selecting any type of stock photo, be sure you understand the terms under which you can use it and how you need to attribute it (such as citing the photographer). There are different types of licenses that govern how photos can be used. For example, you may be able to use a photo in certain types of marketing materials, but not others.

■ **FREE STOCK PHOTOS:** Many free stock photos use [Creative Commons licenses](#).

Others are photos that are in the public domain (meaning their copyright has run out).

[Life of Pix](#), [Pixabay](#) and [StockSnap](#) are three free stock photo sites that offer a variety of high-quality images.

■ **PAID STOCK PHOTOS:** Paying for stock photos can give you access to higher quality photos under a variety of licensing arrangements. In general, paid stock photo services make it easier to find images relevant for business use, as well as to search for images by features such as the number of people in the photos, horizontal vs. vertical orientation, color palette and more.

Before paying for stock photos, make sure the stock photo service has the types of images you need. Different stock photo services may specialize in different types, so if your consulting firm needs photos of businesspeople or your doggie day-care needs photos of dogs, make sure you're not signing up with a service that mostly offers nature or travel photography.



Most stock photo houses let you sign up for a monthly or annual subscription, pay a certain amount for a specific number of photos, or even buy one photo at a time, depending on your needs. [Corbis Images](#), [iStock](#), [Thinkstock](#) and [Shutterstock](#) are popular paid stock photo services that offer a wide range of images suited for most businesses.

ENHANCE YOUR PHOTOS

Once you've got your photos, what next? Do more with your photos by editing, modifying and adding elements (such as text overlay, frames or special effects). These elements can help your photos convey a signature style, making them instantly recognizable as yours and building your brand.

As you take, choose, modify and use photos, make sure the images you use support your brand. If employees are involved in working with your images, it's a good idea to develop a brand "style guide" to ensure consistency.

Here are some ways you can ensure that your photos support your brand:

- Put your business name, logo and/or website URL at the bottom of each photo. This not only brands it as being from your business, but also lets others know it can't be re-used.
- Choose colors, logos and fonts that harmonize with your logo and other existing marketing elements, then use them consistently.
- Use photos that express your brand's "personality." Just like the rest of your marketing materials, photos can convey that your brand is reliable, exciting, innovative, artisanal and more.

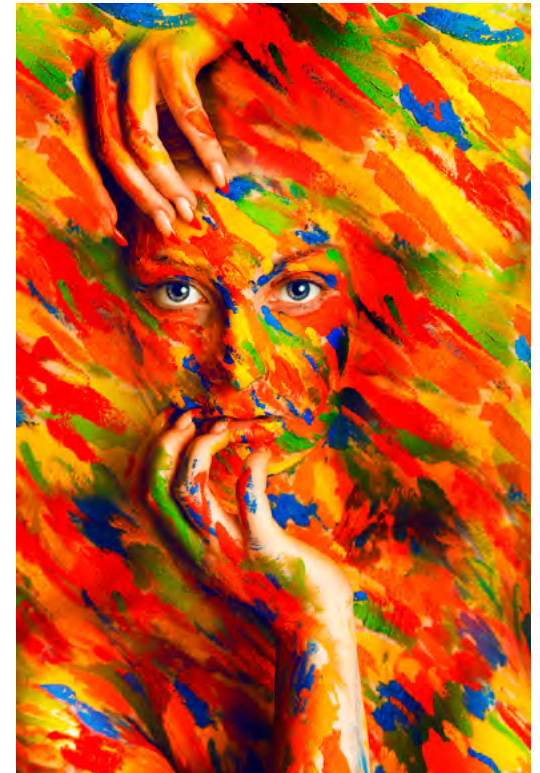
Enhancing and branding your photos is especially important on social media, where your images will be competing with a flood of others for potential customers' attention. For example, adding text to your photos can convey your message better—and faster—than either text or image could do alone. The colors, filters and effects you choose also matter: A [recent study](#) reports that filtered photos get more engagement than photos that aren't doctored, and filters that "increase warmth, exposure and contrast" increase engagement the most.

CONCLUSION

By choosing, using and branding your photos wisely, you can increase the effectiveness of your marketing materials both online and off and tap into the power of visual marketing. ●

RISKY BUSINESS

Don't make the rookie mistake of doing an Internet search, downloading an image you like and re-using it in your marketing materials. If photographers discover you're using their work without permission, they'll send you an invoice (at best) and sue you (at worst). It doesn't matter if you alter the photo, explain that you made a mistake, or stop using the photo. You have still violated copyright laws, which could leave you liable for tens of thousands of dollars.



TOOLS YOU CAN USE

- Edit photos with [Adobe PhotoShop Express](#), [Canva](#) and [PicMonkey](#).
- Add text to photos with [Bubbleframe](#), [Over](#), [Phonto](#) or [PicLab](#).
- Turn photos into videos with [Animoto](#), [Flipagram](#) or [Photo Story](#) (for Windows Phone users).
- Check out five of the most popular [Instagram](#) filters: Lo-Fi, X-Pro II, Valencia, Mayfair and Rise.

